



**HUI HO'OMALU
STATEWIDE
RESOURCE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

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Building Connections

A Newsletter for Foster/Resource Families



Volume 2, Issue 1

November 2008

Fostering Children...A Magical Ride

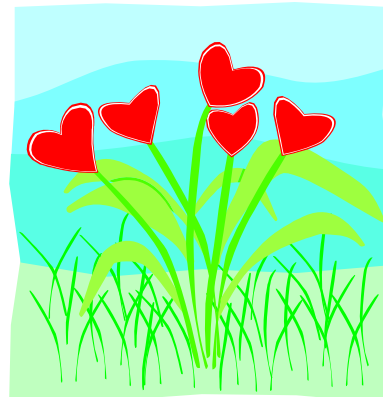
By A Foster/Resource Parent

I would like to introduce myself. I was married twice and ended up a single parent raising three children; a son who is very intelligent and twin girls who gave me nine grandchildren. The twins were in and out of prison which left me with six out of the nine grandchildren to raise from the hospital. My son is very supportive. I've learned to do multiple tasks or as we call them, "tricks of the trade", having three in diapers and three on bottles without the system's help. At that time, I really thought Child Protection Agencies only took away children so I was very scared of them. Little did I know, they really protect them instead. There's a reason why Child Protection Agencies are here today and I believe and support them and will continue to assist them.

When all my grandchildren grew up and moved, I was very lonely and felt empty inside. I became a foster mom and fulfilled what I was missing. I started with one child, enjoyed it, and now I have four children. They are all boys ages 9, a set of 11 year old twins and a 16 year old. All of them have emotional and behavior problems and sometimes medication is required. I have been a foster parent over four years and will continue to do it for the next 20 years. I am 62 years old and I feel there is no child that I cannot relate to.

Fostering children is a magic ride in life with emotions, feelings, responsibilities and a learning process for all involved. You're the driver and the children are the riders. All the stops you make are for the individuals who affect the children directly, including family and friends. I believe in the positive effects of family bonding which can end up as a win-win situation and be very rewarding in the end.

As a foster parent, you provide skilled care, discipline and nurturing to the children. In our home, we have had serious problems and moments that we've addressed through treatment interventions (i.e., therapy, Ho'oponopono, one-on-one, time out and setting limits). You wear different hats as a parental figure; I'm a behavior management specialist, mentor, protector, team member, advocate, teacher, caregiver and friend to my foster children. It sounds tuff and serious but it really isn't. In time, the children start to help themselves through independent living. The children start to bond with each other and become a family that takes care of each other. Nothing happens overnight. It takes time, effort and a whole lot of love. Foster children have a lot of love to share and they need homes that will provide them with care and nurturing. I would like to express how rewarding it is to be a foster parent and encourage others to welcome a child in need into their family.



**HUI HO'OMALU
STATEWIDE
RESOURCE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

The Hui Ho'omalua Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) provides support to the foster/resource family community through identifying ongoing needs, facilitating communication and by sharing resources.

The Building Connections Newsletter is published four times a year to provide information regarding foster and adoptive care to foster/resource parents, service providers, legal guardians and to the public.

This newsletter may be viewed on the following websites:

[www.hawaii.gov/dhs/protection/
social_services/child_welfare/
foster](http://www.hawaii.gov/dhs/protection/social_services/child_welfare/foster)

www.pidfoundation.org

To be placed on the mailing list or if you would like to receive an electronic copy, please call 441-1125 (O'ahu), 888-879-8970 (Toll Free) or E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org

Partners in Development
Foundation
2040 Bachelot St.
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817-2433

'OHANA CONNECTIONS CORNER

Through a Social Worker's Eyes

*By Wilma Friesema, EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing
with Pat Spencer, DHS Social Worker*

For this 'Ohana Connections Corner I spoke with social worker, Pat Spencer, to find out his perspective and experience of 'Ohana Connections work. Pat and I have worked on several cases together. He also was the social worker on Epic's first pilot 'Ohana Connections case. Here's a few highlights of that conversation.

Wilma: What are your general impressions of 'Ohana Connections work?

Pat: I think 'Ohana Connections starts to fix the hurt that was caused at the beginning. The kids lose so much. Reconnecting with family gives them real people, not a fantasy. They can put a color, texture, on who their family is and how they function.

Wilma: How do you see it helping foster youth?

Pat: For the older youth that you and I work with, family connections goes hand in hand with other issues like higher ed and transition work. It helps the kids answer deep questions about roots and connectedness. It gives them the chance to come to their own conclusions about their family which adds shape and form to their lives. So often kids enter the child welfare system with so little; I believe they should leave with more than they came in with. 'Ohana Connections is part of that "more."

Wilma: What do you see are the challenges of reconnecting with family?

Pat: It can be a double-edge sword and there are risks. Sometimes there can be expectations that the family will do a lot of rescuing. For the youth and family it can be a hard lesson to learn the difference between being helped verses being rescued. The youth may be disappointed by the limits of the family, but they can also discover their strengths. I think when the family and kids trust the process, when they both realize what they want out of it but are open to not controlling the outcome, is when it works best.

Wilma: Any final thoughts?

Pat: With these older, teen youth the time we have with them goes so fast. Before we know it, they're aging out of the system. Finding family and helping the youth reconnect with them is opportunity to attend to some of their deeper needs and heal old wounds. I think we owe it to them to do the family connections work.

*For more information about 'Ohana Connections work
contact Wilma Friesema at
EPIC 'Ohana Conferencing, Inc.
748-7921*



This is the first of an ongoing column dedicated to sharing stories about family connections. Whether you're a foster youth, resource parent, bio family member, or service provider, we would love to hear from you! This column will be hosted by Wilma Friesema, 'Ohana Engagement Specialist, at EPIC, Inc. Wilma welcomes your written stories about the joys and challenges of family involvement. She's also happy to just talk story and translate that into a column too. The goal is to share experiences that inspire, teach, and remind us of the love and care that permeates our community. If you would like to share your story, don't be shy! Call Wilma at: 748-7921.

Happy Anniversary!

[illegible]

★ ★	Emily & Greg Ascino (West Hawai‘i)	Foster/Resource family for 10 years	★ ★
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How long have you been a foster/resource parent? We would like to honor you by printing your name and current years of service in our newsletter.

We know you are out there but we need your help. Please send your name and years of service to:

RAC@pidfoundation.org

(Oahu) 441-1125

(Toll Free) 888-879-8970

THANK YOU

Mahalo
CENTRAL PACIFIC BANK

for offering free statewide
notary services to resource
families that need out of state
clearances!!!

Thanks for helping Hawai'i's
keiki and families in need!

Mama Kazama's Mantra Moments...

*By Lynne Kazama,
DHS Program Development Staff*



Culture defines and shapes us---how we view and treat each other. We need to always consider culture in our services, assessments, decisions, how we work with families, etc. Self awareness of our cultural lens is critical!

NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY



On November 14th, the Family Courthouse was a sea of excitement and happiness as 28 foster children were adopted into their forever families consisting of both relative/kin and non-relative/kin. It was a day filled with music, games, prizes, food and fun!

This joyous event was a collaborative effort of DHS, Family Court, various community agencies and programs, private businesses and individuals.

Mahalo to everyone
who made this magical day possible!

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

In 2003, Hawai'i had its first CFSR that resulted in a 2-year Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that required State systemic improvements. DHS in partnership with agencies, communities, and individuals successfully completed the plan and made substantial positive changes that we continue to see today. Through our dedication to improve the lives of families, development of a plan that we could implement, working together towards shared goals, finding resources, making the commitment to change our CWS and not stopping with the completion of the PIP, we succeeded. Hawai'i has begun the process for CFSR 2009 that will further develop and implement the systemic changes that are necessary to successfully improve safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for Hawai'i's keiki and families.

What is the purpose of CFSR? The CFSR is designed to: 1) Support a strong Federal-State partnership for improving the outcomes of child welfare services to children and families and; 2) Link an initial review of State child welfare services with a program improvement process and subsequent reviews that measure progress towards those improvements. It assesses how well States perform in achieving outcomes related to child safety, permanency, and well-being. In addition, it examines systemic factors that affect the achievement of positive outcomes (i.e., Case Review System, Quality Assurance System, Staff and Provider Training, etc.). The Federal Principles that guide the CFSR include an emphasis on accountability and continuous incremental and sustainable improvement as well as reviews that promote various principles (i.e., Family Centered Practice, Culturally Responsive and Appropriate Interventions, Community Based Services, etc.).

What is the Review Process? Each CFSR is a three stage process consisting of a *Statewide Assessment* (Phase 1), an *Onsite Review* (Phase 2) of child and family service outcomes and program systems, and a *Program Improvement Plan* (Phase 3). During Phase 1, the State gathers and analyzes information regarding the outcomes and systemic factors that is critical for understanding the state's capacity and performance. The assessment team must include broad representation of internal and external stakeholders, and there is an emphasis on meaningful involvement of stakeholders, particularly youth and the Court. During Phase 2, a joint Federal-State team, 1) conducts the onsite review; 2) evaluates outcomes by reviewing a sample of in-home and out of home care cases; 3) reviews the case records and interviews family members, caretakers, caseworkers, and service providers; 4) targets three localities (both rural and urban) for review; and 5) conducts interviews with State and local stakeholders to evaluate performance in specific systemic areas. In Phase 3, a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) is established and required for all areas not in substantial conformity which is negotiated with the federal partners. The PIP includes goals, benchmarks, tasks, timelines and designated leads for each outcome area and task. It is a "contract-like" document with penalties for non-achievement.

What are some key Hawai'i Initiatives currently underway? 1) Differential Response System; 2) Engagement with Native Hawaiian communities and recruitment of Native Hawaiian foster homes; 3) Family Finding and maintaining Family Connections; 4) Keiki Placement Panel and Permanency Reviews; 5) Partnership with the University of Hawai'i System (SSW, Law, Nursing, MCC); 6) Collaboration with the Department of Health and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division to increase access to mental health services for SEBD children; 7) Collaboration with the Department of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division Aid to Recovery (ATR) grant; 8) Partnerships with the National Resource Centers that lead to the development and implementation of the Quality Assurance periodic case review system and Differential Response System; 9) Joint initiatives with the Family Court; 10) Strategic Planning Initiative with the Casey Family Program; and 11) Enhancement to the Child Welfare Services database (SHAKA).

What are the key themes for the Statewide Self Assessment? Beginning discussions on the Statewide Assessment occurred at the CFSR Countdown in July 2008. The following key themes were discussed in small groups: 1) Assessment and matching appropriate services to need; 2) Continuous Quality Improvement; 3) Cultural Considerations; 4) Empowerment and family permanence for youth; 5) Family engagement; 6) Foster care reentries; 7) Outcome based contracting; 8) Placement stability for children; 9) Services to families with substance abuse issues; and 10) Strengthening Child Welfare Supervision. The CFSR Statewide coordinating committee and local subcommittees will meet to continue the statewide assessment.

Where can I get more information on the CFSR? DHS has a dedicated website to update everyone on our progress. Visit: cfsr.dhshawaii.net (without the "www") for the latest information.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE (SPC) UPDATES

The goal of the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) is to improve the quality of services to the families of Hawai'i and to address specific areas identified by our locally based research project on child placements. The committee that includes representatives from DHS, Casey Family Programs, UH School of Law, Hawai'i Court Improvement Program, and EPIC, Inc. has been very busy on various, exciting initiatives!

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

The focus and activities of the SPC relates directly to the CFSR outcomes. On July 15, 2008, the SPC members facilitated small group discussions at the CFSR Countdown. (See page 4 for more details on the CFSR).

Native Hawaiian 'Aha

Although there has been a significant decrease of youth, including Native Hawaiian youth in foster care, there are still many Native Hawaiian foster youth in care. DHS initiated the process of seeking community input regarding how we as community partners can best mālama, care for all our keiki and families. Community meetings took place across the islands that led to the culmination of a statewide gathering at the Waimānalo Hawaiian Homestead Halau on November 7, 2008. It is hoped that by discussing the issues that face the Native Hawaiian population we, as a community, can work together to positively effect change in the way Child Welfare Services are provided to all families served.



CWS Partnership Practice Model

The SPC is in the process of formalizing the Hawai'i CWS Practice Model. This Model defines the organization's over arching mission, guiding principles and values; standards of practice; establishes clear procedures and a quality review that leads to improvements.

Rapid Assessment Instruments (RAI)

The SPC worked to develop the Rapid Assessment Instrument Pilot Project and selected 8 assessment tools to be used in the project. The use of these tools would hopefully lead to accurate, upfront and on-going assessments regarding the family's needs and can be useful in case planning and developing outcome based service contracts. The training of the Adult and Adolescent Parenting Inventory (AAPI), Child and Behavior Checklist (CBCL), Strengths and Stressors Tracking Device (SSTD), Client Engagement with CPS (CECPS), Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) and Family Engagement has been completed and implemented in pilot sites. As of September 2008, after three months of using the tools, there was no negative feedback to the RAI Pilot Project. While more assessment results are needed to formulate an analysis that is representative of our CWS population, it is anticipated that the data obtained will be able to provide information on how to best meet the needs of our families and keiki.

Retention and Recruitment of Foster Homes

DHS in collaboration with Casey Family Programs, Hui Ho'omalua and Catholic Charities Hawai'i conducted a review of Hawai'i's Foster Home Licensing process and the recruitment and retention of foster homes. In October 2008, Casey Family Programs reviewed case records of families who did not complete the licensing process or were denied a license as well as Child Specific licensed families who received waivers. Focus groups were conducted with families who elected not to complete the licensing process, staff and cultural consultants, and placement and foster home licensing staff from DHS. The goal was to look at how families are engaged throughout the licensing process and how we can make the licensing experience more "user friendly" and culturally sensitive for families.

Independent Living Program (ILP)

Hawai'i CWS is working with the Casey Family Programs and the National Resource Center for Youth and Development to review and enhance the Independent Living Program. Case reviews, statewide focus groups and an on-line survey will aid in this process.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER:

- 14 Family Programs Hawai'i 2008 Holiday Party. 10 am—3 pm. All resource families are invited to attend. For more information and to register online, visit www.FamilyProgramsHawaii.org.
- 15 East Hawai'i Informational Meeting. 6 pm—7 pm. Haili Christian School MPR Room: 190 Ululani St., Hilo. (See below for details)
- 16 O'ahu Informational Meeting. 5 pm—7 pm. Dole Cannery Office Building-Hui Ho'omalua: 680 Iwilei Rd., Ste 500, Honolulu. (See below for details)
Maui Informational Meeting. 7 pm—8:30 pm. Faith Family Fellowship: 420 N. Wakea Ave., Kahului. (See below for details)

JANUARY:

- Date TBA: O'ahu's "Hot Topics" Workshop (See below for details)

MARCH:

- 30 3rd 'Ohana is Forever Conference (See below for details)

Conference Opportunities!

The Judiciary's Court Improvement Project is planning two conferences in the first quarter of 2009: In late January 2009, Oahu's "Hot Topics" workshop will focus on preparing youth to participate in their case planning and to attend their court hearings; other topics that will be discussed include advocating for youth in the ICPC (Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children) process and the Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. Details on this conference will be announced in the next month. On March 30, 2009, the third 'Ohana is Forever Conference will be held at the Ala Moana Hotel. As in the past, the focus of the day's program is on empowering foster youths, ensuring permanent loving homes for youth who cannot return to their biological families, and preparing them for adulthood.

**For more information, please contact
Faye Kimura at: fayek@hawaii.rr.com**

COMMUNITY INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

Know anyone who has questions about
becoming a foster parent?

Want to know more about Kōkua Bucks
and how you can earn \$200?

Come to our Informational Meetings!

This is FREE to anyone who is interested!

For more information call:
O'AHU: Carol at 285-3824

EAST HAWAII: Michele at 987-5988

WEST HAWAII: Linda at 896-3829

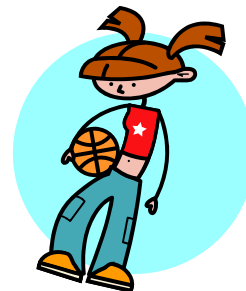
MAUI: Ethan at 268-5122

KAUAI: Monica at 346-8184



GIRLS STREET SMART!

Girls Street Smart is a research-based program adapted for youth in high-risk situations teaching youth how to prevent substance abuse, STDs, and pregnancy. Research outcomes include increasing the knowledge of HIV risk, transmission, and prevention, increasing self-efficacy for limiting HIV risk behavior, increasing positive attitudes towards their future, and decreasing substance use. The youth will learn how to empower themselves and make healthy choices by participating in group, role plays, and hands-on activities. Please contact Jennifer Cilfone at 521-9531, ext. 297 for further information.



Community Classifieds

Do you have something that you would like to donate to other foster/resource parents but you don't know how to get the word out? Are you looking for something that would help you care for your foster/adoptive keiki but you don't know where to find it? The **Community Classifieds** may be able to help.

Let's help each other by sharing our resources. The **Community Classifieds** is FREE to post items to donate as well as wanted ads if you are looking for items to help you care for your keiki.

Send your classified ads to:
E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org
(Oahu) 441-1125 or
(Toll Free) 888-879-8970



Here's wishing you and your family
a safe and joyous holiday season!

Mahalo for providing the gift of hope
to Hawaii's keiki!



Advertise in the Newsletter—Promote Your Business

100% of the proceeds will be used towards supporting our foster/resource families

Display advertisements with borders: business card size = \$30; 1/4 page = \$50; 1/2 page = \$75; full page = \$115.

Send information to: Hui Ho'omalua—RAC, 680 Iwilei Rd., Ste. 500, Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: 441-1125 (Oahu); 888-879-8970 (Toll Free); Fax: 441-1122; E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org

Hui Ho'omalua RAC reserves the right to accept, reject or edit advertisements, articles and notices of events based on publication schedule, space limitations, and appropriateness.

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888-879-8970 (Toll Free)

Fax: 441-1122

E-mail: RAC@pidfoundation.org

The concept for the Statewide Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) was created by the Department of Human Services (DHS) as a means to support the foster/resource family community. Hui Ho'omalū facilitates this committee comprised of foster/resource parents and various community agencies, all dedicated to providing services and support to Hawai'i's keiki and the foster/resource families who care for them. The purpose of the RAC is to identify ongoing needs, facilitate communication, share resources, provide information through a statewide calendar of events and a quarterly newsletter and report on local projects and other topics of interest to benefit Hawai'i's foster/resource families.

RAC Committee Members:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalū

Department of Health

Department of Human Services

EPIC, Inc. 'Ohana Conferencing

Family Court

Family Programs Hawai'i—Hui Ho'omalū

Foster/Resource Parents

Hawai'i Foster Parent Association

Hawai'i Foster Youth Coalition

Heart Gallery Hawai'i

HOPE INC

Partners in Development Foundation—Hui Ho'omalū & Kōkua 'Ohana

Queen Lili'uokalani Children's Center

University of Hawai'i, School of Social Work

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